

The Advisor



**Marching
toward
stability**

THE ADVISOR

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The faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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ON THE COVER

Graduates from the Military Academy at Zakho conduct pass and review, May 30, during a parade celebrating the Transfer of Security for the provinces of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulamiyah, which fall under the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

U.S. Ambassador: Iran's actions must match words

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Iranian delegates advocated a peaceful and secure Iraq during a weekend meeting, but Iran's actions on the ground aren't in synch with its stated policies and principles, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker told reporters May 28.

Crocker said Iraq, Iran and the United States all expressed a common goal for Iraq during yesterday's meeting in Baghdad, hosted by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

"There was pretty good congruence right down the line – support for a secure, stable, democratic, federal Iraq, in control of its own security (and) at peace with its neighbors," Crocker said.

All three delegations also expressed support for Maliki and his government, he said.

But Crocker said Iran's actions – the fact that it supports anti-Iraqi militias and insurgents and provides them arms and explosives – are "at cross-purposes" with its words. He said the United States has solid evidence linking these Iranian-supplied weapons to attacks that have killed Iraqi and Coalition troops, as well as innocent Iraqi civilians.

Crocker said the Iranians didn't respond directly to these challenges, instead reiterating their broad statement of support for the Iraqi government. They also called for a "trilateral mechanism" for the three countries to work through to coordinate on security matters.

While not dismissing the trilateral concept outright, Crocker said he made it clear that yesterday's meeting was aimed at concrete concerns and actions, not more meetings.

"We ... made it clear from the American point of view that this is about actions, not just principles, and I laid out before the Iranians a number of our direct specific concerns about their behavior in Iraq," Crocker said. "What we need to see is



Courtesy photo

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker.

"We ... made it clear from the American point of view that this is about actions, not just principles, and I laid out before the Iranians a number of our direct specific concerns about their behavior in Iraq."

**Ryan Crocker,
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq**

Iranian actions on the ground come into harmony with their stated principles."

During the talks, Iranian officials called the Coalition an occupying force in Iraq and said it has not done enough to train and equip Iraqi Security Forces.

"We, of course, responded on both points, making clear that the Coalition forces are here at the Iraqi government's invitation and under Security Council authorities, and that we have put literally billions of dollars into training and equipping an increasingly capable set of Iraqi Security Forces," Crocker said.

Crocker described the four-hour meeting as "business-like."

Q&A: U.S. Ambassador to Iraq

Ryan Crocker was confirmed as U. S. Ambassador to Iraq in March 2007, and assumed Chief of Mission duties at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad March 29. Prior to serving as the ambassador to Iraq, he served as ambassador to Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria and Pakistan, and earlier served in the U.S. Embassies in Iran, Qatar, Iraq and Egypt.

Crocker's experience and knowledge of Middle Eastern cultures, history, and languages make him one of the State Department's leading experts on Middle Eastern affairs.

Recently, the ambassador met with Iranian and Iraqi delegations at the Prime Minister of Iraq's office for talks that ran in total of about four hours. All three countries laid out the principles that guide their respective policies toward Iraq.

He said all agreed – Iraqis, Americans and Iranians – that the focus of the discussions was on Iraq and Iraq only, and how the countries might support Iraq, its people and its government in restoring security and stability to the country and furthering a political reconciliation process.

In a press briefing following the meeting, Crocker shared his views on the ground-breaking discussions.

Q: Did you find the Iranian side in their negotiation positive?

A: The Iranians laid out their policy toward Iraq, their aims and goals, in terms very similar to our own policy and very similar to what the Iraqi government has set as its own set of guiding principles. So from that point of view, I would say that the talks proceeded positively. What we underscored to the Iranians, though, is that beyond principle there is practice.

Will there be other meetings or will the meetings end today?

The Iraqi government said it would extend



Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Iraqi soldiers ask for identification prior to checking a house in Qubbah, Iraq. Talks between Iraqi, Iranian and U.S. representatives focused on improving the security in Iraq.

an invitation in the period ahead for another meeting. We'll obviously consider that invitation when we receive it.

Were there any concrete agreements that were reached that could lower or improve the security in the country in the short term?

At the level of principle and policy, there was broad agreement -- Iraqis, Iranians and Americans. In terms of security specifics, we laid out a number of them. The Iranians did not offer any detailed response. They did say they rejected such allegations, but again, there was no detailed exchange.

What was the position of the Iraqi side? Did they intervene or did they propose anything in the meeting?

Prime Minister Maliki himself hosted

these talks... The Iraqis, led by the prime minister, were not only present but very active, really, in overseeing the discussion.

Did you at any stage present evidence, pictorial, data or otherwise, about the claims you've been making about Iranian supply of weapons attacking Coalition forces?

The purpose of our effort in this meeting was not to build a legal case. Presumably the Iranians know what they're doing. Our point was simply to say, we know as well. This is dangerous for Iraq. It contravenes Iran's own stated policy. And it is dangerous for the region, because it can produce widespread instability. So we were not there for the purpose of trying to lay out a judicial case on this, simply to say, look, this is what's happening; this is what needs to stop.

Iraqi Air Force places emphasis on safety

**By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class
Kimberly A. Green
MNSTC-I Public Affairs**

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Lessons learned from what happened, and preventing it from happening again, is all a part of an education process that recently took place within the Iraqi Air Force. A vigorous safety climate centered on readiness, mission accomplishment and mishap prevention plays an integral part of becoming and maintaining a combat ready force.

As a result, the Iraqi Air Force graduated its first Basic Flight Safety class of 11, including nine pilots and two maintenance officers, during a ceremony May 24 at New Al Muthanna Air Base.

The graduates completed a five-day training course taught by Iraqi and Coalition instructors. It included instruction on the preventive measures and risk management techniques that can be taken to reduce the chances of mishap occurrences and post-occurrence activities. They also covered accident-response procedures and investigations.

In an effort to reduce preventable mishaps, the Iraqi Air Force implemented this new program to strengthen its budding air force.

“This course will give them the necessary skills to manage an effective safety program and save lives and equipment as they grow their new Air Force,” said Chief Warrant Officer Gregory D. Bonneau, aviation safety officer, MNC-I.

This group is the first set of students specifically trained to effectively manage an aviation safety program.

U.S. Army Maj. Todd N. James, advisor to the Iraqi Air Force Chief of Safety, MNSTC-I, said this is just one phase of the flight safety course with two more in the works. Phase two will consist of on-site flight safety assessments and phase three will be the advanced flight safety course.

“We planned this course to promote a proactive, not reactive, safety management program to where the command can sustain a high level of safety awareness and combat readiness,” said James.

According to one of the pilots, the

training was new and unlike any training he received under the previous regime. He said life as a pilot is much different now.

“Under Saddam, Iraq was away from the world. We did not know what was going on in the world...we did not have a program to concentrate on flight safety,” said Iraqi Air Force Maj. Ala’din Mughir.

Even though the ultimate responsibility of mission accomplishment belongs to the commander, attention to detail begins with the most junior airman and goes up through the highest levels of leadership.

The course is designed for all, including immediate supervisors and their subordinates, to learn how to prevent accidental loss of aviation resources and personnel.

Bonneau stated he believes the key to aviation safety begins with the commander and his safety officer taking safety as their personal mission and recognizing that it can ultimately be the key to success in their command.

“It is a frame of mind,” he said. “Safety can be applied to anything that we do in life whether on or off duty. The key is to educate those we are responsible for and those who we serve.”

Connecting with the community

**Iraqi policemen talk
with children around
the Jazeera Iraqi
Police Station during
an inspection of a
damaged mosque May
23 at Ramadi, Iraq.**



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ricardo Branch

Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani shakes hands with U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon, commander Multi-National Division – North, and South Korean Army Maj. Gen. Yoon Young-Bum, commander Multi-National Division Northeast, after signing the Transfer of Security for the three provinces of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Kurdish government takes charge

By U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

ERBIL, Iraq — The Kurdistan Regional Government took a big step into its future by taking responsibility for the security of its region from Coalition forces at a transfer of security ceremony May 30 in Erbil.

The transfer of security indicates the provinces are capable and willing to take control of security in their region. The provinces that ratified the transfer are Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, which together make up the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani, addressed an assembly of dignitaries during the event with his vision for having a stable democracy that can support economic growth and tourism to the region and to Iraq.

“We are pleased today to officially assume authority,” he said. “We see no more noble a duty than to provide stability and safety to the people of our region. Political stability is the foundation of economic growth. Kurdistan is the gateway to Iraq, and is ready to welcome visitors.”

This transfer of security officially marks seven of Iraq’s 18 provinces as able to govern and protect themselves. The first province to transfer to Iraqi responsibility for security was Muthanna, followed by the provinces of Dhi Qar, Najaf and Maysan.

“We see no more noble a duty than to provide stability and safety to the people of our region. Political stability is the foundation of economic growth. Kurdistan is the gateway to Iraq, and is ready to welcome visitors.”

**Nechirvan Barzani,
Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister**

“It is important for the Iraqi people to see their own government providing for their own security,” said U.S. Army Col. John Jenks, Joint Committee for the Transfer of Security Responsibility with Multi-National Forces – Iraq Strategy Plans and Assessment.

The road to attaining self-sustaining security however, is not an easy one. To achieve this, the provincial governments, also called governorates, must have fulfilled four key criteria.

The first step requires the security threat level to be determined as normal. This means that the provincial authorities must first demonstrate that they can provide for the security and domestic order for their region through the use of provincial or local police forces.

This is followed by an examination of the capabilities of the

See TRANSFER, Page 6

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Iraqi Security Forces to sustain security within the province. While the primary responsibility lies with the police, the ability of the army is also examined in areas where escalation of force is required. The security forces' capability to train and equip its personnel to be mission capable is also reviewed.

Next is governance. The regional government must demonstrate it has the infrastructure to support security operations. This includes a Joint Operations room that coordinates and monitors security operations as well as Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior intelligence frameworks to support security measures.

Finally, in those instances where ISFs are unable to meet a security demand, MNF-I will be available to provide support. It may be in the form of advice and guidance, but may also be in operational areas where the ISFs are still developing capabilities, such as air support and medical evacuations. The provincial governor would make the request for assistance to Iraq's National Government, and the prime minister would make the final decision whether to approach MNF-I for assistance.

The security transfer ceremony also highlights a landmark in another area. The three provinces that achieved the milestone, Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, make up what is known as the Kurdistan Regional Government. Although part of Iraq, the region has its own democratically elected federal government system.

While the KRG is still part of Iraq, it operates within laws enacted by its democratically elected Kurdistan National Assembly, which is recognized by Iraq's constitution.

"The Kurds established their region according to the federal system of government - power is shared between the KRG and Iraq's government - and is the first region like this in Iraq," said Dr. Ali, Director General, Iraqi National Security Council, who requested his name be changed for security reasons.

Ali made a parallel between the type of government representation of the KRG and the United States. "They have their own government like the states do in the U.S., but KRG has a Prime Minister and ministers and are also democratically elected," he said.

According to Jenks, the transfer of security speaks to the will of the Kurdish people to take ownership for their own region. It showcases the Kurd's commitment to "come together and do what they had to do to make this happen."

A military band plays marching music during the parade.



Soldiers of Kurdistan's Regional Government's military demonstrate their martial arts skills by breaking clay boards during the celebration's parade.



Photos by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Kurdish dancers perform a traditional folk dance during the Transfer of Security ceremony in Erbil.



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Corey

Splinting the arm

Members of the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division, provide treatment to U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Ryan Wood, a Coalition medical officer, during a day of medical training recently in Rustamiyah, Iraq. The policemen treated and dressed artificial wounds while learning how to work as a team.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Military operation Viper's Bite ends in success

AL KUT – Iraqi Police and Coalition forces conducted joint operation, Viper's Bite, in the Al Izza district of Al Kut city in the Wasit province May 30.

The operation netted the detention of 13 suspected insurgents of which three are on the Wasit province's most wanted list.

The joint operation also seized machine guns, RPGs, 122mm artillery shells and approximately 1500 rounds of small caliber ammunition.

– *Multi-National Division – Central South Public Affairs*

Iraqi Special Operations Forces capture suspected JAM commander based on tip

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Special Operations Forces, acting on a local tip, apprehended a Jaysh al-Mahdi commander during a raid in Kadamiyah, a northeast suburb of Baghdad May 30.

The suspect is believed to be responsible for providing financial, logistical, and political support for multiple insurgent and terrorist organizations.

The individual is also suspected of managing operations to murder and intimidate local Iraqis, ordering several attacks on Coalition forces and overseeing the training of insurgent recruits on terrorist methods including the construction and detonation of IEDs and EFPs.

No ISOF were harmed in the operation.

– *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Baghdad mosque attacked

BAGHDAD – Iraqi National Police responded to an attack on a mosque in a southern portion of the Iraqi capital May 30.

Elements of the Iraqi National Police reported that the Omar al-Farooq Mosque, a Sunni mosque located in the Risalah neighborhood of the Rashid District, had been destroyed by an unidentified explosive device.

This is the fourth attack by extremist groups on religious structures in the past six days.

Iraqi emergency services went to the location to assist, but no casualties were reported during the attack.

The incidents are under investigation.

– *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

Iraqi Special Operations Forces detain alleged leader of terrorist cell in Baghdad

BAGHDAD – Acting on a tip from local citizens, Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained a suspected assassination cell leader during a raid May 29.

The alleged leader is suspected of kidnapping a nuclear power scientist and murdering both the Director and Deputy of Citizenship and Naturalization.

One other individual present during the operation was also detained.

No Iraqi forces were injured during the operation.

– *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi and Coalition forces respond to Rashid suicide car bomb, evacuate wounded

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Army and Coalition forces responded to a car bomb that detonated in the western Rashid section May 29.

Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops arrived at a Shia mosque in Amel that was reportedly attacked by a suicide bomber driving a white Honda wired as a VBIED.

Iraqi emergency services evacuated the wounded to local hospitals and put out several fires on site.

The incident is under investigation.

— *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

Iraqi Security Forces detained suspected weapons and explosives traffickers in Hawijah

HAWIJAH — Iraqi Police, acting on a tip from captured insurgents, captured two suspects believed to be supplying insurgent networks with weapons and explosives in the city of Hawijah, in the Kirkuk area May 28.

The detained are believed responsible for dealing weapons

and explosives in Kirkuk, distributing artillery rounds to Sunni extremists elements and using them as IED making materials for use against Iraqi and Coalition forces.

No Iraqi forces were injured during the operation.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi Security Forces break up terrorist cell

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Police, acting on a tip from an anonymous citizen, captured nine suspected al-Qaida in Iraq operatives and seized materials believed to be used for small arms attacks, murder, kidnapping and ransom May 27.

The raid netted a small weapons cache including two AK-47 assault rifles, two grenades, more than 600 rounds of ammunition, three ski masks, military equipment, large sums of money and a video camera with evidence of a recent car bomb attack in Samarra.

This raid was conducted in order to disrupt an insurgent cell operating in the Samarra area.

No Iraqi forces were injured during this operation.

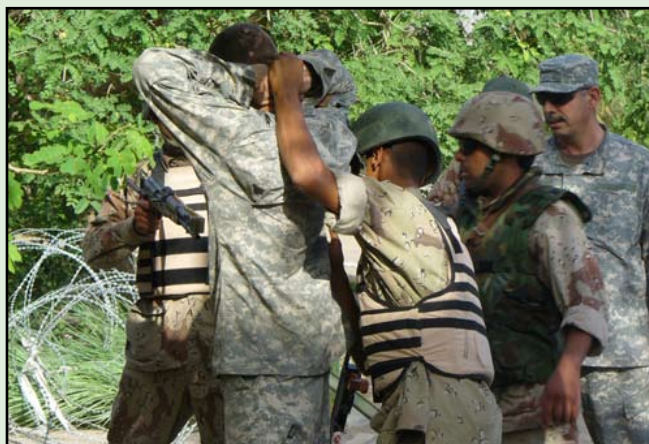
— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*



Coalition forces instruct new Iraqi Army recruits

(Left) An Iraqi soldier practices the techniques he just learned for searching a vehicle during a training event with Coalition forces in Baghdad's International Zone.

(Below) Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, practice detention techniques learned in the event with Coalition forces.



Photos by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Matthew Neyland